

REVIEW GUIDE FOR WORLD WAR I

After Bismarck was dismissed as German chancellor in 1890, his less capable successors let ties with Russia lapse. Before long France emerged at the center of a new diplomatic system. The French created an alliance with Russia (Franco-Russian Alliance 1894), established an understanding with Great Britain (Anglo-French entente 1904) and succeeded in drawing Italy away from its ties to Germany and Austria. As the alliance system divided Europe into armed camps, a series of international crises moved the European powers step by step toward the Great War.

The First Moroccan Crisis

In 1905 Germany provoked a crisis over Morocco that the French were in the process of making a protectorate. The Algeiras Conference of 1906 met to decide the issue. Germany found herself alone except for Austria while Great Britain and Russia supported France. The Bosnian Crisis 1908-9

The Austrian foreign minister, von Aehrenthal, met with the Russian minister, Izvolsky, and together signed the Buchlau Agreement that stated the Russia would support Austria's efforts to annex Bosnia and Herzegovina. Austria would then support Russian efforts to send warships through the Dardanelles. When Austria unilaterally annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina Russia became angered. When Germany backed Austria, Russia backed down.

The Second Moroccan Crisis 1911

Germany sent the "Panther" to the Moroccan port of Agadir to "protect" German interests there. Under pressure France agreed to allow Germany certain parts of the French Congo in return for German recognition of the French protectorate of Morocco.

The First Balkan War 1912-13

Under Russian patronage the Balkan League (Bulgaria, Serbia, Montenegro and Greece) went to war against Turkey. By terms of the Treaty of London (1913) the defeated Ottoman Empire lost all territory in Europe except for the European side of the Dardanelles.

The Second Balkan War 1913

When Serbia demanded part of Macedonia, which Bulgaria claimed as a result of the first Balkan War, the Second Balkan War began. Serbia, Montenegro, Greece, Rumania and Turkey joined to defeat Bulgaria. The Treaty of Bucharest required that Bulgaria turn territory over to Rumania while Serbia and Greece gained most of Macedonia.

The Assassination of Arch Duke Francis Ferdinand

On June 28, 1914 Gavrilo Princip (a member of the Black Hand Society) assassinated heir to the Austrian throne, Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his wife Sophia while they rode in a motorcade. While the Serbian government was not directly involved, they took no action to prevent the incident. Austria was convinced that Serbia was responsible and Austria declared war on Serbia on July 28. Germany had earlier offered Austria a "blank check" of support in a war with Serbia. The Russians had also agreed to back the Serbs in a war with Austria.

Sir Edward Grey's Prophecy

On August 4, 1914 the British Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey predicted the future as he stated: "The lamps are going out all over Europe; we shall not see them lit again in our lifetime."

PRE-WORLD WAR I ALLIANCES

YEAR	ALLIANCE	COMPOUNDING POWERS
1872	League of 3 Emperors	Germany, Austria, Russia
1879	Dual Alliance	Germany and Austria
1881	League of 3 Emperors (renew)	Germany, Austria, Russia
1882	Triple Alliance	Germany, Austria, Italy

1883	Rumania joins Triple Alliance	
1887	League of 3 Emperors (ended)	
1887	Reinsurance Treaty	Germany, Russia
1890	Reinsurance Treaty (ended)	Germany, Russia
1893	Military Convention	Russia, France
1894	Dual Alliance	Russia, France
1902	Franco-Italian Accord	France, Italy
1902	Anglo-Japanese Alliance	England, Japan
1904	Entente Cordiale	England, France
1907	Dual Entente	England, Russia
1907	Triple Entente	England, France, Russia

WORLD WAR I

Despite its name, World War I was primarily a European conflict, fought over European issues. The Allies of World War I included, first, the nations of the Triple Entente: France, Russia, and Great Britain. Serbia was also numbered among the Allies. Italy, Rumania, and Greece ultimately supported the Allied cause, as did the United States and Japan. Although the Japanese had no interests at stake in Europe, they hoped to acquire Germany's concessions in China, as well as the German-held islands in the North Pacific. The Central Powers, Germany and Austria-Hungary, won the support of Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire.

On the western front, the failure of the Schlieffen Plan caused the fighting in France to become a stagnant battle of trench warfare between the invading Germans and the French and British defenders. On the eastern front, the Russians did relatively well against the armies of the Austro-Hungarian empire. By the end of 1916, however, the Germans had effectively ended Russia's ability to resist, although the Russians did not conclude a formal peace treaty (Brest-Litovsk) with the Central Powers until March 1918.

Germany's campaign of unrestricted submarine warfare against Great Britain brought the United States into the war on the Allied side in April 1917. American participation in the war provided the French and British with what they most needed: nearly unlimited munitions. In the summer of 1918, Allied offensives broke the stalemate in France. The Germans were forced to retreat, and the fighting ended with the signing of an armistice in November 1918.

The task of making the final peace settlement was in the hands of the Paris Peace Conference, which met in 1919-1920. A year earlier, in January 1918, President Wilson had presented his proposals for a peace based on principles of justice. In the Fourteen Points, he called for open diplomacy, freedom of the seas, free trade, and a reduction of armaments, and he urged self-determination for the subject peoples of the German, Austro-Hungarian, and Ottoman empires. In the fourteenth point, Wilson endorsed the creation of "a general association of nations." The League of Nations became the central part of Wilson's vision of the postwar world, and the Fourteen Points as a whole put the United States on a collision course with the European Allies.